DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 282 TM 028 026

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TITLE Year One Evaluation University at Albany/SUNY Project Renaissance.
INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Albany. Evaluation Consortium.
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 42p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; *College Freshmen; Focus Groups; Higher Education; *Integrated Curriculum; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Living Learning Centers; Parent Attitudes; Parents; Program Evaluation; School Holding Power; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *State University of New York Albany

ABSTRACT

Project Renaissance is a program offered to first-year students at the University of Albany (State University of New York). The purpose is to provide a multi-disciplinary integrated approach to curriculum, supporting a more cohesive environment that recognizes the individual student's cognitive and social needs. Participants are housed in the same residence hall and attend classes together for at least 6 hours weekly. The teaching method is also multi-disciplinary. An evaluation of the first year of the project was conducted to determine participants' initial program expectations, perception of program implementation, and initial outcomes. Interviews with faculty and staff, student focus groups, classroom observations, and surveys of students and parents (approximately 149 students and 34 parents initially) provided evaluation data. Participation benefited students though living with those with whom they attended classes, and the project assisted students in building relationships with faculty, staff, and other students. Faculty benefited by gaining colleagues and by being exposed to new experiences. Program staff members and residence hall staff felt that they also benefited from program participation. Project Renaissance increased student retention and recruitment while giving the university the feel of a close-knit community. Students suggested that more interaction and organization between faculty and students would improve the project, and they recommended a better definition for the program brochure. An appendix contains the program evaluation surveys. (Contains 16 tables.) (SLD)

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Year One Evaluation
University at Albany/SUNY
Project Renaissance

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Executive Summary

Project Renaissance is a unique program offered to incoming first year students at the University of Albany (SUNY). The purpose of the program is to provide a multi-disciplinary integrated approach to curriculum, supporting a more cohesive learning environment that recognizes the individual student's cognitive and social needs. Project Renaissance students are housed together in the same residence hall and attend classes together for at least six hours weekly. The teaching methodology is multi-disciplinary, and students are encouraged to access information on their own, utilizing new technologies. As part of the first year implementation, the Evaluation Consortium at the University at Albany was asked to assist in conducting a formative evaluation of Project Renaissance. The purpose of the evaluation was to document participants' perceptions of three areas: (1) initial program expectations, (2) perception of program implementation; and (3) initial outcomes. Specifically, the evaluation team conducted interviews with faculty and staff, focus groups with students, observations of the classrooms, and surveys of students and parents. The following are the major findings of the first year of the program.

Expectation of Program Stakeholders

Each of the stakeholders (faculty, staff, residence hall staff, and CETL staff, parents, and students) involved with this project had specific expectations for Project Renaissance.

- Parents expected that Project Renaissance would assist with their children's' transition and adjustment to college life. They also indicated that they thought it would facilitate educational growth and the attainment of study skills for their children.

- Students indicated that initially they did not know what to expect from the project. They received information from a brochure detailing Project Renaissance, but did not completely understand the essence of the project.

- Faculty expected Project Renaissance to serve as a means of offering students an interdisciplinary integrated course through team teaching and learning. They expected to be able to teach first year students utilizing innovative methods. They also expected Project Renaissance to provide them with intellectual stimulation as well as the opportunity to work closely with other faculty.

- Residence hall staff expected the project to assist them in becoming more involved with the academic aspect of students' lives. They expected that through the project, they would increase their ability to support students but also, that these students would have an increased sense of responsibility and interest in the living and learning environment.

- CETL staff expected the project to bring together faculty, students and staff in a living and learning community. The project was also a means of addressing the issue of general education, and increasing recruitment and retention.

Outcomes of Project Renaissance

Benefits to Participants

- Students benefited by living with those with whom they attended classes. The project assisted them in building relationships with faculty, staff and other students. Students also indicated that they felt Project Renaissance broadened their awareness and critical thinking and increased technological knowledge

- Faculty benefited by gaining colleagues, working closely with other faculty and learning from them. Faculty were exposed to new experiences which created a sense of excitement for many of them. Many faculty viewed Project Renaissance as a means of teaching outside of their discipline. They were rewarded by being closely involved with the students.

- Residence hall staff indicated that they benefited from their involvement with Project Renaissance by forming positive relationships with other staff and by learning to look at issues from various perspectives. Another benefit was the ability to become involved with students' academic life and incorporate that into residential life.

- CETL staff indicated that they benefited by having the opportunity to create a living and learning environment within a large university. They learned how to work with faculty to develop the idea of a teaching community within a public university. This project allowed the CETL staff to work with many aspects of university life and bring them together.

Contributions to the University

- Project Renaissance increased student retention and recruitment while giving the university the feel of a close-knit community.

- Students were exposed to many subjects as well as increasing technological and research skills. Students were able to discuss ideas openly, learn how to express themselves, and increase problem solving skills.

- Project Renaissance increases the opportunity for faculty to work with one another and be exposed to new subjects. Faculty formed closer relationships with students by having smaller classes, discussion groups, and by meeting with students for two semesters. This created a productive, open, learning and teaching atmosphere.

- Residence Life staff became involved with students' academic life and become a greater part of the university increasing the likelihood that they will continue within their position.

Recommendations from Participants

- Students suggested that more interaction and organization between faculty and students would improve the Project. Students also recommended that computers should be set up sooner, and that the program should be clearly defined in the brochure. Students related specific details to improve class participation and group activities.
- Maintain and strengthen the "living together" component of Project Renaissance through better coordination and more involvement of residence hall staff.
- Provide better coordination between academic and residential parts of the project.
- Clarify the goals of Project Renaissance as it relates to general education.
- Explore the various modes of effective instruction in large groups.
- Continue and strengthen the discussion groups creating a stronger linkage between lectures and discussion groups.
- Review the transferability of Project Renaissance credits to other colleges.
- Switch teaching pairs to enable students to be exposed to different ideas and faculty.
- Clarify definitive writing intensive credits for Project Renaissance courses.
- Reinforce the need for faculty to be willing to assist with small discussion groups.
- Reinforce the roles/responsibilities of faculty, adjunct faculty, and teaching assistants.
- Recognize and encourage teaching assistants as valued resources for teaching.
- Explore a sustainable method of rewarding departments and faculty involved with Project Renaissance.
- Communicate clearly to students the purpose of Project Renaissance.
- Consider admission requirements including motivation and interests for diverse topics, technology and peer learning.

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Introduction

Project Renaissance is an innovative living-learning program for a selected number of first year students at the University at Albany/ SUNY. The goal of the program is to provide incoming students with a unique academic experience that is interdisciplinary in approach and technology-oriented in process Under the coordination of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), Project Renaissance strives to enable freshman students to live and learn with their peers, creating a sense of social and academic community During the academic year 1996-1997, approximately 150 students, six faculty members, six adjunct faculty or teaching assistants, and residential hall staff from Indian Quad participated in Project Renaissance.

The Evaluation Consortium at Albany was asked to provide a formative first year evaluation of Project Renaissance. The purpose of the evaluation was to document participants' perceptions in three areas: (1) initial program expectations, (2) program implementation, and (3) initial outcomes. This report summarizes the data collected under the following headings:

Expectations

- Students' entry level expectations for University life.
- Students' and parents' expectations of Project Renaissance..
- Faculty and staff expectations of Project Renaissance.

Implementation of Project Renaissance

- Description of the academic process.
- Description of the residential life process.
- Participants' perceptions of the process.
- Faculty and staff perceptions of the process.

Perceived Outcomes of Project Renaissance

- Students' end of year perception of University life.
- Students' end of year perception of Project Renaissance
- Faculty and staff end of year perception of Project Renaissance.
- Benefits to participants.
- Benefits to University at large.
- Retention

Methodology

A mixed-model methodology was employed for the evaluation of Project Renaissance; both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to collect information. A summary of the methodology plan is presented in Table 1. A paper-pencil survey was developed to assess students' perceptions of services, interactions with staff, academic experience, social/emotional needs and residential life. The indicators were modified to allow assessment at three key time periods: (1) program entry; (2) mid-year, and (3) end of year. The first survey was given to students two weeks following their arrival at the university. The second survey was administered following the winter break at the beginning of the second semester. The third survey was completed by students one week prior to the end of the first year.

Two student focus groups were conducted in April to gather in-depth feedback about the program areas. The first focus group was with twelve randomly selected students who continued into the second semester of the project. The second was with students who dropped out of Project Renaissance during the fall term or early in the spring term.

In addition to these direct assessments of student perceptions, classroom observations were conducted as a means of validating the general student comments relating to the process of teaching and learning in Project Renaissance. (These observations were not conducted to evaluate curriculum and/or faculty.) Additional visits were made to residential halls throughout the year by the evaluators to observe the residential component of Project Renaissance.

Parent surveys were conducted during a breakfast for Project Renaissance parents during Parent's Weekend in October. The student survey was modified to gather parents' expectations concerning experiences their child might have due to involvement in Project Renaissance. The parents were asked the same types of questions relating to their expectations for interactions with staff, study habits, use of services, and overall experiences with Project Renaissance and university life in general.

Interviews with faculty, CETL staff, and residential hall staff were conducted at the beginning of the project implementation to assess their expectations of Project Renaissance. The same stakeholders were interviewed at the end of the project implementation in May. Questions focused on stakeholders' perceptions of the Project; perceived assessment of student outcomes; opportunities and/or benefits resulting from participation in the Project; constraints or barriers related to the Project; and suggested areas for improvement.

Appendix A presents the paper-pencil surveys, interview protocols, focus group protocols, and observation protocols developed by Evaluation Consortium.

Table 1
Summary of Data Collected for the Evaluation of Project Renaissance

Time	Instruments	Stakeholders
September February May October	Surveys: Initial, Mid, End Survey	Students Parents
November May	Interviews Interviews	Faculty CELT staff Residential hall staff
April	Focus Group Discussions	Students in the project Students who left the project
September February March April	Observations Observations	Residence hall facilities Classroom lectures, Discussion groups

Section 1: Expectations

This section summarizes expectations expressed by the various stakeholders at the initiation of Project Renaissance. Data sources include responses to the first student survey, the parent survey, initial interviews with faculty, residential hall staff, CETL staff, and a portion of information from student focus groups.

Students' Entry Level Expectations for University Life Beyond Project Renaissance

A major goal of Project Renaissance is to assist in the integration of the student and the university system; consequently as part of the evaluation, students were questioned about their expectations for university life in general. A summary of students' entry level expectations of the academic, social/ emotional and residence life experiences while enrolled at the University at Albany are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

Table 2
Mean of Responses to Items Related to Expectations for Academic Experiences During the First Year of College

ACADEMIC QUESTIONS	PROGRAM ENTRY
Exposing myself to new ways of thinking	1.81
Improving my writing skills	1.76
Doing hands-on activities in class	2.22
Learning to think better	2.15
Spent time studying with my roommate	3.05
Spent time studying with peers in Seneca/Tuscarora	2.87
Doing class work in groups	2.49
Doing class work independent of others	2.36
Doing class work with people other than those in Project Renaissance	2.54
Studying in groups	2.61
Studying independent of others	2.37
Studying with people other than those in Project Renaissance	2.66
Courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge	1.81
Access to computer facilities when I need them	1.65
Access to computer help (technical assistance) when I need it	1.53
Tutoring opportunities available if I need it	1.94
Receiving help from faculty members when I need it	1.66
Faculty that are interested in students	1.79

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n=148

In general, students rated the academic component of university life to be important prior to entering college; however, there was some diversity in levels of importance. Initial academic expectations related to the classroom included:

- Students rated assistance with computers and technical assistance to be more important to them than any other item.
- Students rated what they learn as individuals (eg. writing skills, new ways of thinking) as very important to them.
- Methods of studying were rated moderately to very important to students. Independence in doing classwork and studying was rated as slightly more important than studying and working cooperatively with others.

Table 3
Means of Responses Regarding Expectations for Social and Emotional Experiences During the First Year of College.

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL	PROGRAM ENTRY
Having on-campus experiences that make me more independent	1.89
Gaining positive social experiences	1.66
Developing strong friendships with other students	1.65
Developing friendly relationships with residence hall staff	2.07
Developing a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member	1.97
Developing relationships with students of my ethnic or racial heritage	2.82
Developing relationships with students of differing ethnic or racial heritage	2.41
Developing relationships with students with disabilities	2.84
Emotional support readily available if I need it	2.39
Interesting recreational activities available to participate in	2.25
Faculty that are a positive influence on my personal growth	1.97

1=extremely important, 2=very important, 3= moderately important,
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n=148

Prior to the college experience, students had high expectations in terms of social and emotional experiences. These included the following:

- Students rated positive social experiences, development of strong friendships, and experiences that increase independence as most important.
- Also important was the development of a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member with the expectation that faculty would have a positive influence on personal growth.
- The development of relationships with those of like or different racial/ ethnic heritage and with students with disabilities was important but to a lesser degree.

Table 4
Means of Responses Regarding Expectations for Experiences within the Residence Hall During the First Year of College.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE	PROGRAM ENTRY
Comfortable living arrangements	1.69
Conditions that are favorable to studying	1.71
Living arrangements that are safe	1.69
Living arrangements that will increase my friendship opportunities	1.95

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n=148

At the time of entry, students indicated that the residential life aspect of college was important. This included:

- living arrangements that were comfortable,
- living arrangements that were safe, and
- living arrangements that were favorable to studying.

Overall, the students' entry expectations of university life included access to computers, technical assistance, and comfortable living arrangements. Other areas that were important were developing strong friendships with peers, living arrangements that are safe, receiving help from faculty when needed, and faculty that are interested in students.

Students' and Parents' Expectations of Project Renaissance

Prior Information About Project Renaissance: At the time of entry, students were asked how much they knew about Project Renaissance prior to Freshman Orientation. Approximately half of the students (49%) knew nothing or very little about the program prior to arrival at the University at Albany. Only a few students (2%) indicated that they were well informed about the program before arriving at the university.

These initial findings were supported by focus group information. When students were asked what they expected from Project Renaissance, the majority reiterated that they did not know what to expect. They indicated that the objectives listed in the brochure were vague and abstract, and that the pamphlet of information did not say enough about what to expect from the project. Many stated that they expected more than what they received.

Students' and Parents' Initial Expectations for Project Renaissance: Despite this lack of familiarity with the project, students and their parents did have expectations of how Project Renaissance would serve students; these expectations initially reflected both access to services and opportunities for interaction with staff. Presented in Table 5 is a summary of

expectations related to services; data summarizing opportunities for interaction are presented in Table 6.

Table 5
Expectations for Project Renaissance (access):
Students and Parents

Item	Students (%) (n=149)	Parents (%) (n=34)
Computer services	92	85
Computer facilities	83	74
Library support services	66	80
Advising services	61	62
Information of campus events	60	50
Social activities on campus	59	41
Social activities off campus	45	9
Information on community events	40	21
Transportation services	31	3
Athletic facilities	28	9
Registration	27	35
Financial services	23	6

Major findings pertaining to access to services include:

- Access to computer services and facilities were the most frequently checked expectations followed by library support, advising services, and campus events. Both students and parents expected Project Renaissance to provide these services.
- Approximately half the students expected to have Project Renaissance assist with access to activities on and off campus.
- The least expected services to be provided by Project Renaissance were access athletics, financial aid services, and transportation services.

Focus group information from students who left the project after the first semester provided additional insights. These students indicated that they expected to learn more about technology and to have smaller classes instead of large lectures. These students did not perceive the program experience as matching what was described in the brochure.

Expectations that both students and parents had regarding academic and social involvement with faculty, peers, residence hall staff, and graduate assistants are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6
Expectations for Interactions:
% Students' / % Parents' Responses

Type of opportunity	Faculty/ Graduate Assistants	Peers	Residence staff
Spend time outside class to discuss academic issues with:	85 / 92	75 / 77	32 / 53
Spend time outside class to discuss personal issues with:	81 / 40	82 / 65	34 / 41
Spend time outside class in informal discussions with:	91 / 69	77 / 88	34 / 65
Call the following by his/her first name:	57 / 27	87 / 85	66 / 65
Engage in social activities with:	23 / 27	92 / 82	34 / 47

Students n = 149
Parents n = 34

Major findings included:

- Both parents and students expected students' involvement in Project Renaissance to provide the opportunity for both academic and informal interaction with faculty and graduate assistants outside of class. Parents and students, however, did not expect Project Renaissance to provide the opportunity for students to personally engage in social activities with faculty. More than half of the students expected to be on a first name basis with their professors and graduate assistants.
- The majority of both students and parents expected Project Renaissance to assist students with having an opportunity to interact socially and informally with their peers. Students expected Project Renaissance to provide the opportunity to discuss personal issues with peers.
- Parents had higher expectations of student/ residence hall staff interactions than did students. More than half the parents expected students to interact academically and informally with residence hall staff. Only one third of students had this expectation. Students did not expect Project Renaissance to provide the opportunity for them to interact with residence hall staff socially or with regards to academic issues.

Faculty and Staff Expectations for Project Renaissance

Faculty Expectations

In interviews, faculty members' indicated that their initial expectation of Project Renaissance was to have the opportunity to offer students an interdisciplinary integrated course through team teaching and learning. Specifically, they expected Project Renaissance to:

- provide intellectual stimulation for themselves and for students,
- to reflect the broad outlook of a research university, and
- to utilize and to teach with current technology.

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- provide intellectual stimulation for themselves and for students,
- to reflect the broad outlook of a research university, and
- to utilize and to teach with current technology.

In broader terms, the faculty expected Project Renaissance to offer an environment of students' "living and learning together."

CETL Staff Expectations

CETL staff stated that they expected Project Renaissance to serve multiple purposes. These included:

- addressing the issue of general education,
- increasing student retention and assisting in national recruitment,
- integrating the students' academic and residential life,
- broadening students' value of the university as a community, and
- assisting students to become more committed to the university in general.

Residential Staff Expectations

Residential staff expected Project Renaissance to:

- integrate academic life and residential life within the university,
- create the opportunity to mix the living atmosphere with learning,
- allow students more opportunity to communicate about their experiences,
- help students get to know each other better, and
- allow students to work more closely with faculty and staff.

Section 2: Implementation of Project Renaissance

Implementation of Project Renaissance utilized an evolving democratic process in which participants, including faculty and students, were able to express their views and needs. In response, the process was adapted where possible. This included a "learning by doing" method in which various participants contributed constructively to improve the project throughout the program implementation. Presented below is a brief description of the implementation of Project Renaissance in academic and residence settings and in academic setting and participants' mid-year perception of the project.

Description of the Academic Process

As part of the evaluation, six lecture sessions, including the last lectures of both teams, and two discussion groups were observed. The purpose of observation was not to evaluate the curriculum and/or faculty, but rather to obtain general perceptions about students' enjoyment and involvement in the process of teaching and learning in Project Renaissance. Following is a summary of the large instructional component of Project Renaissance, the discussion groups, and the last session.

Large Instructional Component

Lectures took place in the large centers in the university with seats for 100-400 students. Students were seated in a scattered manner. In all the lectures observed, most of the teaching team (three faculty, and three adjunct faculty and/or teaching assistants) were present. A number of innovative teaching approaches were observed: round table discussions with guest speakers; participatory discussion; lecture followed by a video and team teaching. The size of the room and the number of students was an inherent challenge in all lectures. In some situations, faculty were seated among the students and were paying close attention to students' participation as well as facilitating students' voting, questions and answers, etc.. When students were asking questions, faculty often ensured that all students could hear what their peers had asked. In most of the lectures, students came late and some left early. The level of involvement of students varied: some seemed engaged, many paying attention, some falling asleep, and a few doing other class work.

Discussion groups

The discussion groups were more informal and relaxed than lectures. Each group was composed of 13-16 students surrounding a large table. The students expressed opinions openly and appeared to be comfortable in doing so. Themes of the discussion groups centered around topics of the lectures, as well as other items relevant to current issues in todays' society. The subject matter was thought provoking and created interesting and informative dialogue. Faculty facilitated the discussions by giving non-judgemental feedback while offering their personal views concerning the topics. The groups appeared to be well run and informative, and created a place where students had the opportunity to learn to think for themselves and discuss their beliefs.

Last Session

The last session of the course for both teams demonstrated a high level of students' efforts and involvement. In one team, the virtual museum on the web was presented in which students collectively developed themes, designed the site, conducted research, and wrote the text. The other team had a casual gathering during the last class which included both faculty and students. At this party, students indicated that they would miss the faculty and the program in general. Students stated that they would miss working closely with the faculty and appreciated the personal attention they received. It was obvious that both students and faculty were satisfied with their involvement in Project Renaissance and looking forward to next year. Some students expressed concern for what would happen to them during their second year when not involved in Project Renaissance. They also offered ideas to faculty on how to assist incoming students in becoming acclimated to the university and the project. Faculty photographed the event and shared the photos with everyone by posting them on the Internet.

Description of the Residential Life Process

The residential life aspect of Project Renaissance was observed informally on a number of occasions. Residence assistants were involved closely with the Project Renaissance students

and supported them with academic and personal issues. Students were provided with computers in each residence hall and access was available throughout the day. Residence hall staff had social gatherings with Project Renaissance students, including movie nights, pizza parties, and other social events.

Participants' Perceptions of the Process

Student Perceptions of University Life

Students were asked to fill out the mid-year experience survey during the first week of the second semester. They were asked to respond to the questions based on actual occurrence instead of expectations of experiences. Again, questions pertaining specifically to Project Renaissance as well general university experience were included. Data based upon what students actually experienced about university life in general during their first semester are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

Table 7
Means of Responses to Academic Items Based on Students First Semester Experiences

ACADEMIC QUESTIONS	MID
Exposing myself to new ways of thinking	2.42
Improving my writing skills	2.62
Doing hands-on activities in class	2.76
Learning to think better	2.40
Spent time studying with my roommate	3.50
Spent time studying with peers in Seneca/Tuscarora	2.95
Doing class work in groups	2.46
Doing class work independent of others	2.17
Doing class work with people other than those in Project Renaissance	2.92
Studying in groups	2.92
Studying independent of others	2.16
Studying with people other than those in Project Renaissance	3.04
Courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge	2.03
Access to computer facilities when I need them	2.23
Access to computer help (technical assistance) when I need it	2.71
Tutoring opportunities available if I need it	2.61
Receiving help from faculty members when I need it	2.47
Faculty that are interested in students	2.38

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n= 91

At mid-year students rated their academic experiences as moderately to very important. More specifically, students responded as follows:

- Within an academic context, students indicated that participating in courses that reflect principles from different areas of knowledge, studying independent of others, and doing classwork independent of others were most important.
- Of moderate importance to students was how they spent their time studying. Students did not find it as important to study with roommates, in groups, or with people other than those in Project Renaissance.

These data reflect differences when comparing students' entry expectations to their perception of actual experiences for their first semester. Notable differences were:

- Though still important what students learn was rated less important mid-year than at entry. Exposure to new ways of thinking and improving writing skills was less important to students than they expected it would be.
- Importance of how students studied changed slightly mid-year. Students expected to study independently of others, and it became even more important than they first indicated. Studying in groups became less important.
- Importance of direct assistance also changed. At entry students expected technical assistance, faculty availablilty, and tutoring. By mid-year, though still important, this area was no longer as important

Table 8
Mean Responses to Social and Emotional Items Based on Experiences During the Students First Semester.

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL	MID
Having on-campus experiences that make me more independent	2.27
Gaining positive social experiences	2.12
Developing strong friendships with other students	1.75
Developing friendly relationships with residence hall staff	2.47
Developing a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member	2.52
Developing relationships with students of my ethnic or racial heritage	2.44
Developing relationships with students of differing ethnic or racial heritage	2.11
Developing relationships with students with disabilities	3.40
Emotional support readily available if I need it	2.97
Interesting recreational activities available to participate in	2.89
Faculty that are a positive influence on my personal growth	2.49

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n= 91

Social and emotional experiences were still rated as important to students at mid-year.The majority of students indicated that during their first semester, developing strong friendships was most important to them. Developing relationships with others from a different background was also very important to most students surveyed.

When comparing entry expectations for social/ emotional issues to actual experiences during the first semester, a number of changed opinions were noted:

- Within this area, most students surveyed rated their expectations higher than what they experienced. Though important overall, by mid-year this area was not as important to students as at entry.
- Developing relationships with others whether of the same racial or ethnic heritage or of different racial or ethnic heritages was an area of variation. By the end of the first semester this area was rated as more important than at entry.
- At the time of entry and at mid-year developing strong friendships was the most important social/emotional experience.

Table 9
Mean Responses to Items Concerning Students Experiences with Residential Life During the First Semester.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE	MID
Comfortable living arrangements	2.80
Conditions that are favorable to studying	2.89
Living arrangements that are safe	2.08
Living arrangements that will increase my friendship opportunities	2.06

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n= 91

At mid-year experiences within the residence hall continued to be important to students.Living arrangements that were safe, and that provided opportiunites for increased friendships were very important. Comfort and ability to study were moderately important. Overall, items relating to the residence hall decreased in importance, but the same items (safety and increasing friendship opportunities) continued to be rated as important.

Student Perceptions of Project Renaissance

Presented in Tables 10 and 11 are students' mid-year perceptions of Project Renaissance. These include the ability of Project Renaissance to assist in access to services and interactions with participants.

Table 10

Percentage of Students who Indicated that Project Renaissance Provided Them with the Opportunity to Access Various Activities

ACCESSING	MID (%)
Library Support Services	69
Computing Services	82
Computer Facilities	78
Social activities on Campus	24
Info on campus events	24
Social activities off campus	20
Info on community events	34
Registration	10
Financial Services	10
Advising Services	24
Athletic Facilities	11
Transportation	27

n= 91

Findings for mid-year access to services as presented in Table 10 include the following:

- During the first semester, the majority of students indicated that Project Renaissance provided them with the opportunity to access computer services, computer facilities, and library support services.
- Very few of the students indicated that Project Renaissance assisted them in accessing registration services, financial services, and athletic facilities.

At mid-year, students did not perceive that Project Renaissance assisted them to the degree expected.

- The actual percentage of students assisted with accessing services during the fall semester was lower than expected for all services except library support services.
- Of special note, students received less assistance from Project Renaissance than expected on obtaining information pertaining to campus events and social activities on campus as well as social activities off campus.

Table 11
Percentage of Perceptions of Interactions for Students with Faculty, Staff, and Peers (% Students' Responses)

Type of opportunity	Faculty/ Graduate Assistants	Peers	Residence staff
Spend time outside class to discuss academic issues with:	64	84	16
Spend time outside class to discuss personal issues with:	12	82	28
Spend time outside class in informal discussions with:	54	82	27
Call the following by his/her first name:	81	89	72
Engage in social activities with:	20	87	26

n= 91

Findings for mid-year self-reported interactions as presented in Table 11 include:

- Students reported that Project Renaissance provided the opportunity to interact with their peers in all respects during the fall semester.
- Project Renaissance provided students with the opportunity to spend time out of class discussing personal issues and engaging in social activities with residence staff more than with other staff.
- Students indicated that Project Renaissance assisted them in interacting with faculty and graduate assistants by allowing them to discuss academic issues, having informal discussions, and calling them by their first name.

Actual experience of interactions with faculty, staff, and peers differed somewhat from the expections students had. These differences included:

- Project Renaissance provided students with less opportunity to interact with faculty/ graduate assistants informally discussing personal and academic issues than expected.
- Project Renaissance enabled most students to interact with their peers as expected.
- Project Renaissance provided students with some opportunity to interact with residence hall staff, although less than was expected.

During the focus groups, students expressed positive and negative opinions concerning their experiences with Project Renaissance during the first semester. Initially students reported confusion concerning the organization and objectives of courses. They indicated that in many cases, expectations were unclear and materials did not flow together. Students indicated that the community service aspect of the course was difficult in that it was confusing and mandated out-of-class time on the weekends. They perceived the faculty as being inflexible in regards to the community service and not understanding student work, study, and social time demands. Some students related that the discussion groups often did not coincide with lecture material and that there were times readings were assigned that

were never discussed. Many also stated that they expected to receive more assistance with the technological aspects of the course, and were frustrated when left on their own.

Overall results illustrate that the experience most important to students was developing friendships with other students during the first semester. Also important were taking courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge, developing relationships with students from different backgrounds, having positive social experiences, and having living arrangements that were safe and increased friendship opportunities.

Faculty and Staff Perceptions of the Process

Faculty Perceptions of the Process

Faculty perceptions concerning experiences with Project Renaissance were gathered utilizing interviews in November and May. Questions incorporated expectations, interpretation of the objectives, benefits to faculty, students, and the university, difficulties encountered, and recommendations for the future.

Overall faculty perceptions of the implementation of Project Renaissance were positive. Their major expectations were met in that they believed they were supported by faculty and administration. They found the first semester challenging and intellectually stimulating. Many indicated that they enjoyed working with incoming students; that it was exciting and professionally rewarding. Faculty indicated that working with members of other disciplines was rewarding in and of itself as well as providing an excellent experience to students. Faculty also indicated that the opportunity to learn new technology was an important area of staff development that they might have not otherwise obtained.

Faculty did indicate that there were some initial problems in the process, but that with the support of administration, CETL staff, and other faculty, the majority of the problems were solved. For example, faculty mentioned that computers were not ready at the beginning of the year, and that the problems with the network frustrated students. Some faculty indicated that time commitment - meetings, lectures, discussion groups, commuting - was a challenge. It also was pointed out that Project Renaissance involved working with many different people, and general discussion was necessary to adapt to teaching across various disciplines. Roles of faculty, adjunct faculty and graduate assistants were not clearly defined which lead to confusion about responsibilities. Other difficulties that arose were issues related to the academic level of the students. Some faculty indicated that they overestimated motivation and reading level of students and would change reading selections in the future. Using alternative forms of assessment instead of testing was challenging but necessary due to the interdisciplinary and creative nature of the course. Some faculty reported that because of this use of alternative assessment, it was difficult to get unmotivated students interested in the work.

CETL staff perceptions of the process

Multiple meetings were held with CETL staff during the fall semester and formal interviews were conducted in November and May. CETL staff were aware of the intricacies of implementing an innovative project such as Project Renaissance. For instance, because this was the first year of the program, they were responsible for coordination of the mentors, tutors, and all social activities concerning Project Renaissance. CETL staff reported meeting with faculty and staff throughout the semester to keep abreast of any problems or issues that arose. CETL staff indicated that Project Renaissance was a participatory project which allowed students, staff, and faculty to interact in a way usually not seen within a large university. This created an atmosphere with which some faculty and staff were comfortable, but others were not.

Residential Life Staff Perceptions of the Process

Interviews were held with residential hall staff in November and May to gather their perceptions of Project Renaissance. Residential hall staff were asked about Project Renaissance expectations, their role in the program, benefits to staff and students, program difficulties, and recommendations for the future. Residential hall staff expectations were met in that Project Renaissance created the opportunity for students to live and learn together. Residential hall staff indicated that Project Renaissance allowed them to get to know the students better and increased the opportunity for social activities within the residence hall. Residential staff acted as a means of support to students and were available to assist students with problems as they arose. Although residential life staff were enthusiastic about their participation in Project Renaissance, they also indicated that there were some issues of concern. Residential hall staff wanted be more informed with what occurs during class, thus having greater knowledge about students' academic requirements. This would require an increase in communication between faculty and Residence Life staff, but would result in more awareness by residential staff and faculty of student problems, both personal and academic. Residence Life staff also expressed a desire to get to know faculty better and to have the opportunity to discuss student issues with them more often, thereby increasing faculty knowledge of students' residence life needs and experience.

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Section 3: Perceived Outcomes of Project Renaissance

Perceived outcomes of Project Renaissance were documented by conducting focus groups with students, interviewing faculty and staff, and utilizing results from the end of year survey of students. Outcomes for each of the participants in Project Renaissance are described below.

Students' End of Year Perception of University Life

The third survey was completed by students at the end of the second semester. The purpose of this survey was to collect data concerning students' experiences during the entire first year at the University. Displayed in Tables 12, 13, and 14, are data for academic, social/emotional, and residential life respectively.

Table 12
End of Year Mean Responses to Academic Items

ACADEMIC QUESTIONS	END
Exposing myself to new ways of thinking	2.49
Improving my writing skills	2.59
Doing hands-on activities in class	3.00
Learning to think better	2.59
Spent time studying with my roommate	3.63
Spent time studying with peers in Seneca/Tuscarora	3.22
Doing class work in groups	2.43
Doing class work independent of others	2.08
Doing class work with people other than those in Project Renaissance	3.12
Studying in groups	2.95
Studying independent of others	2.44
Studying with people other than those in Project Renaissance	3.12
Courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge	2.12
Access to computer facilities when I need them	2.22
Access to computer help (technical assistance) when I need it	2.78
Tutoring opportunities available if I need it	2.88
Receiving help from faculty members when I need it	2.56
Faculty that are interested in students	2.39

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n= 42

Repsonses pertaining to academic life indicate:

- Most items were rated as very to moderately important to students.
- Doing classwork independently of others and participating in courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge were rated most important.

- Less important than other academic experiences were spending time studying with others, roommates or peers in Tuscarora/ Seneca, and those in Project Renaissance.

Students' responses varied over time to illustrate that in most cases, expectations that seemed to be very important at the beginning of the year changed to become moderately important. This was the case for each item except that which reflected doing class work independent of others. Doing work independently of others became more important over time while participating in groups gradually became less important.

Table 13
End of Year Mean Responses to Social and Emotional Items

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL	END
Having on-campus experiences that make memore independent	2.49
Gaining positive social experiences	2.37
Developing strong friendships with other students	2.07
Developing friendly relationships with residence hall staff	2.87
Developing a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member	2.56
Developing relationships with students of my ethnic or racial heritage	2.73
Developing relationships with students of differing ethnic or racial heritage	2.76
Developing relationships with students with disabilities	3.55
Emotional support readily available if I need it	3.34
Interesting recreational activities available to participate in	2.90
Faculty that are a positive influence on my personal growth	2.56

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n= 42

Illustrated in Table 13 are the responses students made to items based on social and emotional experiences or characteristics. Once again, the majority of items are rated as moderate to very important. The most and least important experiences students were involved in during their first year are:

- Gaining positive social experiences and developing strong friendships with other students were experiences students found to be very important.
- Of less importance to students during their first year was developing relationships with students with disabilities and having emotional support available if needed.

For most of these items, students entry rating of importance was greater than that at the end of the year. As students progressed through the year the overall rating of importance of academic support gradually decreased.

Students End of Year Perceptions of Project Renaissance

Presented in Tables 14 and 15 are the students' end of year perceptions of Project Renaissance. These include the ability of Project Renaissance to assist students with

accessing services and the perceptions of interactions with participants throughout the students' first year at the university.

Table 14
End of Year Mean Responses to Items Concerning Experiences with Residential Life

RESIDENTIAL LIFE	END
Comfortable living arrangements	2.44
Conditions that are favorable to studying	2.73
Living arrangements that are safe	2.22
Living arrangements that will increase my friendship opportunities	2.12

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me
n= 42

Shown in Table 14 are the mean responses to items concerning residential life experiences during the first year of college. Items most important to students continued to be living arrangements that increase friendship opportunities and living arrangements that are safe. Most students rated these items as very important in the beginning of the year and continued to find them very important by the end of the year.

Table 15
Percentage of Students who Indicated that Project Renaissance Provided them with the Opportunity to Access Various Activities During the First Year of College

ACCESSING	END (%)
Library Support Services	81
Computing Services	88
Computer Facilities	68
Social activities on Campus	27
Info on campus events	34
Social activities off campus	22
Info on community events	34
Registration	12
Financial Services	5
Advising Services	34
Athletic Facilities	5
Transportation	20

n= 42

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In Table 15, the percent of students who reported that Project Renaissance offered the opportunity to access various services are illustrated. The opportunity to access services are noted below.

- Project Renaissance provided students with the opportunity to access library support services and computing services most often.
- Students responded that they were less likely to have the opportunity to access registration and financial aid services as well as athletic facilties.

A comparision of entry expectations of Project Renaissance with students experiences indicate:

- The percentage of students who expected to receive access to services was less than students' reported actual opportunity to access most items.
- Students' expectations for access to libraries, computer services and facilities were high at the beginning of the year and was generally met.
- Students' expectations for assistance in developing social relationships and participating in social activities were frequently not met.

Table 16
Students Interactions During the First Year of College:
% Students' Responses

Type of opportunity	Faculty/ Graduate. Assistants	Peers	Residence staff
Spend time outside class to discuss academic issues with:	80	93	20
Spend time outside class to discuss personal issues with:	49	83	22
Spend time outside class in informal discussions with:	76	81	27
Call the following by his/her first name:	90	90	71
Engage in social activities with:	37	90	24

n= 42

Students had the opportunity to interact with a variety of staff over the first year of college. Table 16 illustrates the interactions that students engaged in. Specifically students responded as follows:

- Students were able to interact most often with their peers. They spent time discussing academic, personal, and informal issues as well as engaging in social activites.
- Students interacted with faculty/ graduate assistants, calling them by their first name, and discussing academic issues. Students less often interacted with faculty/ graduate assistants by discussing personal issues and relating to faculty/ graduate assistants socially. It should be noted, however, that many students reported informal discussions with faculty/ graduate assistants outside of class and spending time discussing academic issues outside of class. Half of the students reported spending time discussing personal issues with faculty and graduate assistants outside of class.

- The least amount of interaction occurred between students and residence hall staff.

Student expectations for interactions with staff varied from the experiences they had during their first year of college. Noted differences were as follows:

- Expectations for interactions with faculty and graduate assistants changed over time. Expectations for interaction with faculty/ graduate assistants were higher in the beginning of the year, actual experiences decreased by mid-year, and then interactions with faculty and graduate assistants increased in all areas by the end of the year. Students were engaged in social activities with faculty/ graduate assistants and experienced calling faculty by their first name more than expected.
- Responses concerning interactions with peers indicated that students expectations and experiences were similar. This continued to be the group with which students interacted most often in all ways.
- In regards to interactions with residence hall staff, student expectations were higher than actual experiences in all areas except calling staff by their first name. Students experienced interactions with residence hall staff less than with faculty and graduate assistants.

Faculty and staff end of year perceptions of Project Renaissance

In general, faculty were satisfied with the outcomes of the first year of Project Renaissance -- "it has come a long way." Overall faculty were happy with the quality of discussion among students and the success in the community action component. Many faculty agreed that for most of the students the objectives of Project Renaissance were achieved, although they indicated that some students needed to do more work, or were still disengaged from the lecture. Other specific comments included:

- Exposure to variety of topics was more than expected.
- Success can be judged from students' improvement in written works and critical thinking.
- Living-learning arrangement has helped, especially with computer and library skills.
- The Project helped students look at issues from a more interdisciplinary perspective
- Project Renaissance aided students' transition to university life.
- Students were able to spend more personal time with faculty.

Faculty were asked if they saw growth in Project Renaissance students, specifically if there was any difference in the way and/or how much students have grown compared to other regular first year students. Generally, faculty agreed that students had grown significantly over the year. Specific examples include:

- Most of the students, who were fearful of computers, could, at the end of the year, use their computer with great ease and could create their own web pages.

- Very shy students became out-spoken, and started to ask questions in class or through e-mail.
- Although the first semester was difficult, by the end of the year, students knew what they were doing and that they were in charge of their learning.
- Students gained from exposure to all sorts of materials, and utilized different ways of analyzing information.
- Students were more sophisticated in general, and more adjusted to university life.

Faculty indicated that comparing growth of Project Renaissance students with that of other first year students was not easy because the faculty had worked with these students for a longer period of time -two semesters. Some faculty were unable to compare the two groups of students due to previously working with graduate students and/or lack of experience with first year students.

Benefits to Participants

As part of the evaluation, representatives of all participants were asked to address, at the end of the year, the benefit of Project Renaissance. Findings are as follows:

Students

All students involved with the focus groups indicated that they benefited most from living with those with whom they attended classes. They indicated that involvement in the program assisted them with meeting others and getting to know them better. They believed that Project Renaissance made the transition to higher education easier. Many felt they learned about different issues which broadened their awareness and critical thinking. Others related that computers frightened them when they first arrived, but after being a part of Project Renaissance, they were more comfortable with the technology. Students indicated they felt they played an important role in the project because they discussed problems with staff who listened to them and, therefore, were able to create change within the project. Many students indicated that they received a good grade, but that they worked harder for that grade than in other classes.

Faculty

Faculty stated that they benefited in multiple ways from teaching and participating in Project Renaissance. Many said they gained wonderful colleagues, learned a great deal from each other, and enjoyed team-teaching. They also mentioned that diversity, involvement, and close contact with students was rewarding. They reported the participation widened their perspective: some indicated they enjoyed the exposure to different subject areas and expanded their knowledge of their own discipline. Other benefits included: learning to teach a large class in a lecture center classroom; learning to teach undergraduates, and teaching intellectual students.

CETL staff

The CETL staff indicated that this was an important opportunity to develop the idea of a teaching community within a public university. It was a complex undertaking that allowed the staff to learn a great deal about a variety of subjects. They learned about working with faculty, how interdisciplinary teaching is difficult for students, about university culture and how it operates, and how to incorporate all aspects of the university into one program. CETL staff gained knowledge about the need for recruitment, faculty/ staff training, how to address student problems, and how to receive grant support. Overall, Project Renaissance was viewed as a learning experience by the CETL staff, enabling them to create a more well rounded, organized project for future years.

Residence Hall staff

Residence hall staff indicated that they benefited from their involvement with Project Renaissance by forming positive relationships with other staff and by learning new ways of looking at issues. Residence hall staff reported different perspectives when discussing issues with other staff that assisted them in working with students. They also related that they were able to become closer to the students.

Benefits to the University at Large

As part of the final interview, Project Renaissance participants were asked to discuss their perception of the program's benefits to the University as a whole. Following is a summary of their responses:

- Project Renaissance is a distinctive project that can attract students and recover a "human" aspect which tends to be missing in a large public institution. It provides care and attention to students as individuals.
- The project enables the university community to rethink "what should be General Education."
- Project Renaissance provides a way to foster students' growth, exposure to a variety of topics, and a mastery of computer skills, which collectively make students more competent in the long run. Students increased research skills and become more open, speaking in class and in the discussion groups. Students also increased their ability to think critically and over a number of disciplines. This increased their problem solving skills which can be generalized to all areas of life. The community action aspect added to the education a student takes away from the university and encouraged them to become more responsible citizens.
- Project Renaissance increased faculty interaction and exposed them to new subjects, thereby increasing their knowledge.
- Project Renaissance allowed Residence Life staff to be more involved with all aspects of the students' life. This enabled staff to address issues have from all areas of the university.

- Students, faculty, and staff become part of a living and learning community that incorporated all aspects of university life into one program. This sense of community increases the feeling of responsibility and closeness that each participant had for the group.

Section 4: Student Retention

One expectation of Project Renaissance at the beginning of the year was to increase student retention. Student data collected by CETL staff and information collected during the student focus group regarding student retention are presented below. This includes: a summary of quantitative retention information (e.g. How many and types of students who left), and qualitative responses to student interviews about why they left, their experiences while involved with the project, and recommendations for improving the project. Additional information concerning student retention is available through the University at Albany Office of Institutional Research Department.

Students who left Project Renaissance

From Fall 1996 to Spring 1997, two students dropped from the University. In addition, 27 students left Project Renaissance but are still enrolled in the University.

Original numbers (9/4/96)	189	
Class list (9/25/96)	182	(96%)
Total enrolled in Spring 1997	149	(79%)
Left the Project but still in the University	27	(14%)
Dropped out of the University	2	(1%)

* Data on four students who left the Project between 9/25/96 and the Spring semester are unavailable.

Twenty out of 29 students who left the Project were interviewed upon their exit. Fifty-five percent (n=16) were female and 45% (n=13) were male. Ethnicity of those who left us are as follows:

Ethnicity	%	n
White, non-Hispanic	55%	(n=16)
Black	14%	(n= 4)
Asian	10%	(n= 3)
Hispanic	7%	(n= 2)
No Indicator	10%	(n= 3)

The students that dropped Project Renaissance classes represent the following majors: Psychology/pre-Health, Law, Business, History, American Politics, Chinese, and Biology.

Perceptions of Students who left Project Renaissance

The following information pertains to those students who left the Project. It does not reflect the views of students who are still in the Project. This information derives from the CETL attrition study and student focus groups.

Why students left Project Renaissance

According to the attrition study conducted by CETL, common reasons for leaving Project Renaissance were: students wanted to focus on their major (n=6), there were scheduling conflicts (n=5), or students did not find the class materials interesting (n=5). Other students indicated that the Project was not what they expected (n=2), lectures were not organized (n=2), and too much time was required (n=2).

In the focus group interview, students who dropped out the project indicated the reasons they left as: (1) lectures were disorganized and not stimulating; (2) it was difficult to connect various topics; (3) needed courses for major; (4) discussion groups did not relate to the lectures; (5) favorite staff left the program; (5) community service took place on the weekend as a mandatory event; and (5) just did not like it.

Perceptions of support

The majority of the students who left the project said there was adequate support with advisement, academics, residential life and peers. Half of them, however, said technical support was not adequate.

Perception of experiences with faculty and/or staff

Eleven out of 20 respondents indicated that their experiences with the faculty and/or staff were "all right" or "OK". Seven students said the experiences with discussion instructors were "good". The remaining students indicated that they had limited experiences with lecturers and/or discussion instructors. During the focus group, some students related that they viewed a few of the professors as unapproachable and felt that animosity between faculty was noticeable. Others indicated that the relationships they had with the faculty were close and supportive; that staff were 'totally accessible' and 'really cared'.

Were students' expectations fulfilled within Project Renaissance?

<u>Faculty Experience</u>

Students' views on their experiences with faculty seem to be mixed. Six students said their expectations were "fulfilled completely", four students said they were "unfulfilled", and three said the Project was not at all what they expected. Five students said that they did not know what to expect when they entered the program.

Social Life Experiences

Seven students said their expectations concerning social life were "completely fulfilled", and two students indicated they were "somewhat fulfilled". Four students did not know what to expect. Two students said their expectations were not fulfilled, and two students had no prior expectations.

How did Project Renaissance impact students' thinking in the areas of social and academic life?

When asked this question, the more than two-thirds of the students offered no comment. Of those that did respond, two students said that with regard to social life Project Renaissance helped in their adjustment to the University. Another two said they gained more interaction with peers and faculty; and two students said it was good to share a room with classmates. With regard to their academic life, two students said Project Renaissance helped them in adjusting to the academic environment. Two students said the Project showed the University's initiative. One student said it helped him/her think holistically, and one student said it helped to keep GPA up.

Recommendations students made for improving Project Renaissance

Five students suggested that more interaction and organization between faculty and students would improve Project Renaissance. Five students recommended that course material be improved. Other recommendations included: get computer rooms set up sooner, clearly define the program in brochure, relate readings to the course materials, increase group activities, and decrease lectures.

Section 5: Participants' recommendations to improve Project Renaissance

During interviews and focus groups, students, faculty, and staff were asked to give recommendations for improving Project Renaissance in the future. It should be noted that because of the formative nature of the project and the evaluation, some of these items are currently being addressed or may already have been altered for next year. Following is a summary of participants' recommendations for change.

Living arrangements

- Maintain and strengthen the "living together" component of Project Renaissance through better coordination and more involvement of residence hall staff.
- Create an opportunity for students to learn from their diverse background.
- Provide better coordination between academic and residential aspects of the project.

Academic arrangements

- Clarify the goals of Project Renaissance as it relates to general education.
- Explore the various modes of effective instruction in large groups.
- Continue and strengthen the discussion groups creating a stronger linkage between lectures and discussion groups.
- Review the transferability of Project Renaissance credits to other colleges.
- Switch teaching pairs to enable students to be exposed to different ideas and faculty.
- Clarify definitive writing intensive credits for Project Renaissance courses.

Recruitment of faculty

- Reinforce the need for faculty to be willing to assist with small discussion groups.
- Reinforce the roles/responsibilities of faculty, adjunct faculty, and teaching assistants.
- Recognize and encourage teaching assistants as valued resources for teaching.
- Explore a sustainable method of rewarding departments and faculty involved with Project Renaissance.

Recruitment of students

- Communicate clearly to students the purpose of Project Renaissance.
- Consider admission requirements including motivation and interests for diverse topics, technology and peer learning.
- Use Project Renaissance students as recruiters for future incoming students through presentations at their high schools, etc.

APPENDIX A

Survey 1: Beginning of year expectations of students

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
			%		
1. Exposure to new ways of thinking	48	28	22	3	0
2. Improving my writing skills	49	34	12	2	3
3. Opportunities for hands-on activities in class	30	26	36	7	2
4. Learning to think better	54	25	16	3	1
5. Courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge	34	30	28	7	2
6. Access to computer facilities when I need them	59	26	9	3	3
7. Access to computer help (technical assistance) when I need it	66	21	9	2	2
8. Having on campus experiences that make me more independent	45	27	25	1	2
9. Positive social experiences	55	28	14	1	1
10. Developing strong friendships with other students	58	24	13	2	2
11. Emotional support readily available if I need it	31	22	32	7	8
12. Interesting recreational activities available to participate in	28	36	22	13	1
13. Comfortable living arrangements	60	20	14	3	3
14. Conditions that are favorable to studying	52	29	15	3	1
15. Friendly relationships with residence hall staff	34	34	26	5	2
16. Living arrangements that are safe	58	21	17	1	3
17. Living arrangements that will increase my friendship opportunities	42	31	18	7	2
18. Studying with my roommate	15	21	27	16	20
19. Studying with peers in Seneca/Tuscarora	16	21	35	14	14
20. Tutoring opportunities available if I need it	46	26	17	9	1
21. Receiving help from faculty members when I need it	56	24	17	2	1
22. Developing a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member	42	27	24	6	1
23. Faculty that are a positive influence on my personal growth	40	33	20	7	1
24. Faculty that are interested in students	50	28	19	3	1
25. Doing class work in groups	24	24	36	10	5
26. Doing class work independent of others	24	26	40	9	1
27. Doing class work with people other than those in Project Renaissance	17	32	32	12	5
28. Studying in groups	18	28	35	12	7
29. Studying independent of others	25	30	33	9	3
30. Studying with people other than those in Project Renaissance	15	27	38	14	5
31. Developing relationships with students of my ethnic or racial heritage	24	20	24	14	18
32. Developing relationships with students of differing ethnic or racial heritage	29	27	27	7	10
33. Developing relationships with students with disabilities	18	21	33	14	14

1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= moderately important,
4= not so important, 5= does not matter to me

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Project Renaissance Expectations

Students answered the following:
Students expect to spend 2.73 hours a day doing assignments outside of class (mean of hours)
Students expect to spend 15.24 hours a week doing assignments outside of class (mean of hours)

Students expect Project Renaissance to assist them in accessing the following:
(Percentages of responses)

Library Support Services	65.1	Advising Services	59.7
Computing Services	89.9	Computer Facilities	81.2
Transportation Services	30.2	Registration	26.8
Financial Services	22.8	Athletic facilities	27.5
Social Activities on campus	57.7	Social Activities off campus	44.3
Information on campus events	59.1	Information on community events	39.6

Project Renaissance provided students with the opportunity to:
(Percentages of responses)

	Faculty	Peers	Residence Staff	Graduate Assts
Spend time outside of class to discuss academic issues with:	81.5	74.7	31.5	41.8
Spend time outside of class to discuss personal issues with:	23.3	82.2	33.6	9.6
Spend time outside of class in informal discussions with:	65.8	76.7	33.6	32.2
Call the following by his/her first name:	51.4	87.0	65.8	58.9
Engage in social activities with :	19.2	91.8	33.6	18.5

Other Activities:

During the Fall semester students did the following: (Percentage of responses from students)	%
Go home this semester other than at Holiday times	77.4
Call friends from high school	90.4
Join a sorority/fraternity	14.5
Join a campus organization	66.4
Do volunteer work (on/off campus)	45.2
Participate in athletics (includes club sports)	44.8
Be employed (off/on campus)	51.0

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Survey 2: Mid year results of survey given to students to determine experiences and/ or characteristics of college life during their first semester. (n= 91)

The following is a list of experiences or activities students might been involved during their first semester of college. Students used the scale below to indicate the degree to which they were involved in each of the following:
1= extremely involved, 2= very involved, 3 = moderately involved, 4= not so involved, and 5 = not at all.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
			%		
1. Exposure to new ways of thinking	17.8	35.6	35.3	6.7	3.3
2. Improving my writing skills	15.6	30.0	33.3	16.7	3.3
3. Doing hands on activities in class	14.4	22.2	38.9	18.9	4.4
4. Learning to think better	23.3	26.7	36.7	10.0	2.2
5. Having on campus experiences that make me more independent	24.4	37.8	23.3	12.2	1.1
6. Gaining positive social experiences	30.0	33.3	30.0	4.4	1.1
7. Developing strong friendships with other students	47.8	30.0	18.9	2.2	1.1
8. Developing friendly relationships with residence hall staff	18.9	34.4	27.8	13.3	3.3
9. Spending time studying with my roommate	14.4	7.8	22.2	21.2	32.2
10. Spending time studying with peers in Seneca/ Tuscarora	17.8	35.6	30.0	13.3	2.2
11. Developing a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member	18.9	33.3	28.9	12.2	5.6
12. Doing class work in groups	17.8	35.6	30.0	13.3	2.2
13. Doing class work independent of others	21.1	42.2	33.3	2.2	0.0
14. Doing class work with people other than those in Project Renaissance	11.1	25.6	31.1	22.2	8.9
15. Studying in groups	15.6	20.0	32.2	18.9	12.2
16. Studying independent of others	30.0	34.4	25.6	6.7	2.2
17. Studying with people other than those in Project Renaissance	11.1	24.4	27.8	20.0	15.6
18. Developing relationships with students of my ethnic or racial heritage	17.8	37.8	30.0	8.9	4.4
19. Developing relationships with students of differing ethnic or racial heritage	24.4	43.3	26.7	4.4	0.0
20. Developing relationships with students with disabilities	4.4	12.2	38.9	25.6	17.8

Listed below are characteristics that reflect students' academic, residential and social life in college. Students used the scale below to indicate the degree to which they actually experienced each of the following during the fall semester:
1=extremely applicable, 2=very applicable, 3=moderately applicable, 4=not so applicable, and 5=not the case at all

	1	2	3	4	5
21. Courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge	34.4	31.1	26.7	5.6	0.0
22. Access to computer facilities when I need them	30.0	35.6	18.9	10.0	4.4
23. Access to computer help (technical assistance) when I need it	15.6	26.7	32.2	20.0	4.4
24. Emotional support readily available if I need it	10.0	17.8	45.6	16.7	8.9
25. Interesting recreational activities available to participate in	12.2	24.4	32.2	22.2	7.8
26. Comfortable living arrangements	13.3	27.8	32.2	16.7	8.9
27. Conditions that are favorable to studying	7.8	24.4	44.4	15.6	6.7
28. Living arrangements that are safe	23.3	47.8	24.4	3.3	0.0
29. Living arrangements that will increase my friendship opportunities	27.8	46.7	20.0	3.3	0.0
30. Tutoring opportunities available if I need it	20.0	24.4	33.3	18.9	3.3
31. Receiving help from faculty members when I need it	17.8	31.1	35.6	12.2	1.1
32. Faculty that are a positive influence on my personal growth	13.3	37.8	37.8	8.9	2.2
33. Faculty that are interested in students	20.0	34.4	33.3	8.9	2.2

Of the above statements, the three that are most important to students are: # 21 , #27 , #33

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Fall Semester Project Renaissance Experiences

Students answered the following:
During the first semester students spent 2.83 hours a day doing assignments outside of class (mean of hours)
During the first semester students spent 13.56 hours a week doing assignments outside of class (mean of hours)

Project Renaissance assisted students in **accessing** the following:
(Percentages of responses)

Library Support Services	68.9	Advising Services	24.4
Computing Services	82.2	Computer Facilities	77.8
Transportation Services	26.7	Registration	10.0
Financial Services	10.0	Athletic facilities	11.1
Social Activities on campus	24.4	Social Activities off campus	20.0
Information on campus events	24.4	Information on community events	34.4

During the first semester Project Renaissance provided students with the **opportunity** to:
(Percentages of responses)

	Faculty	Peers	Residence Staff	Graduate Assts
Spend time outside of class to discuss **academic** issues with:	60.0	84.4	15.6	23.3
Spend time outside of class to discuss **personal** issues with:	20.0	82.2	27.8	2.2
Spend time outside of class in **informal discussions** with:	48.9	82.2	26.7	21.1
Call the following by his/her first name:	76.7	88.9	72.2	36.7
Engage in social activities with :	16.7	86.7	25.6	3.3

Other Activities:

During the Fall semester students did the following: (Percentage of responses from students)	%	Means
Go home this semester other than at Holiday times	83.3	Times =3.6
Call friends from high school	4.4	
Join a sorority/fraternity	14.4	
Join a campus organization	93.3	
Do volunteer work (on/off campus)	2.2	Hours =5.56
Participate in athletics (includes club sports)	38.9	
Be employed (off/on campus)	54.4	Hours =9.09

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Survey 3: Results of the third survey completed by students to determine opinions concerning the entire first year of college. (n= 42)

The following is a list of experiences or activities students might been involved during their first semester of college. Students used the scale below to indicate the degree to which they were involved in each of the following:
1= extremely involved, 2= very involved, 3 = moderately involved, 4= not so involved, and 5 = not at all.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
			%		
1. Exposure to new ways of thinking	17.1	34.1	34.1	12.2	2.4
2. Improving my writing skills	17.1	34.1	31.7	7.3	9.8
3. Doing hands on activities in class	4.9	31.7	34.1	17.1	12.2
4. Learning to think better	12.2	36.6	34.1	14.6	2.4
5. Having on campus experiences that make me more independent	22.0	31.7	29.3	9.8	7.3
6. Gaining positive social experiences	9.8	58.5	22.0	4.9	4.9
7. Developing strong friendships with other students	29.3	46.3	14.6	7.3	2.4
8. Developing friendly relationships with residence hall staff	9.8	34.1	24.4	17.1	12.2
9. Spending time studying with my roommate	4.9	19.5	24.4	7.3	41.5
10. Spending time studying with peers in Seneca/ Tuscarora	7.3	22.0	31.7	19.5	19.5
11. Developing a friendly relationship with at least one faculty member	19.5	34.1	24.4	14.6	7.3
12. Doing class work in groups	19.5	41.5	19.5	9.8	7.3
13. Doing class work independent of others	31.7	34.1	24.4	7.3	0.0
14. Doing class work with people other than those in Project Renaissance	9.8	19.5	36.6	17.1	17.1
15. Studying in groups	14.6	17.1	31.7	22.0	9.8
16. Studying independent of others	24.4	24.4	29.3	14.6	2.4
17. Studying with people other than those in Project Renaissance	4.9	24.4	39.0	17.1	14.6
18. Developing relationships with students of my ethnic or racial heritage	14.6	26.8	36.6	9.8	9.8
19. Developing relationships with students of differing ethnic or racial heritage	7.3	36.6	36.6	12.2	7.3
20. Developing relationships with students with disabilities	4.9	19.5	26.8	9.8	36.6

Listed below are characteristics that reflect students' academic, residential and social life in college. Students used the scale below to indicate the degree to which they actually experienced each of the following during the fall semester:
1=extremely applicable, 2=very applicable, 3=moderately applicable, 4=not so applicable, and 5=not the case at all

	1	2	3	4	5
21. Courses that reflect principles from several areas of knowledge	36.6	31.7	19.5	7.3	4.9
22. Access to computer facilities when I need them	31.7	34.1	27.0	4.9	7.3
23. Access to computer help (technical assistance) when I need it	12.2	29.3	31.7	22.0	4.9
24. Emotional support readily available if I need it	7.3	17.1	31.7	22.0	22.0
25. Interesting recreational activities available to participate in	4.9	26.8	46.3	17.1	4.9
26. Comfortable living arrangements	24.4	26.8	34.1	9.8	4.9
27. Conditions that are favorable to studying	19.5	14.6	41.5	17.1	4.9
28. Living arrangements that are safe	17.1	53.7	22.0	4.9	2.4
29. Living arrangements that will increase my friendship opportunities	26.8	41.5	24.4	7.3	0.0
30. Tutoring opportunities available if I need it	7.3	19.5	51.2	22.0	0.00
31. Receiving help from faculty members when I need it	14.6	36.6	29.3	17.1	2.4
32. Faculty that are a positive influence on my personal growth	14.6	36.6	34.1	7.3	7.3
33. Faculty that are interested in students	24.4	31.7	29.3	9.8	4.9

Of the above statements, the three that are most important to students are: # 26 , #33 , #31

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Project Renaissance Experiences

Students answered the following:
During my freshman year I spent 2.60 hours a day doing assignments outside of class (mean of hours)
During my freshman year I spent 13.82 hours a week doing assignments outside of class (mean of hours)

Project Renaissance assisted students in **accessing** the following:
(Percentages of responses)

Library Support Services	80.5	Advising Services	34.1
Computing Services	87.8	Computer Facilities	68.3
Transportation Services	19.5	Registration	12.2
Financial Services	4.9	Athletic facilities	4.9
Social Activities on campus	26.8	Social Activities off campus	22.0
Information on campus events	34.1	Information on community events	34.1

Project Renaissance provided students with the opportunity to:
(Percentages of responses)

	Faculty	Peers	Residence Staff	Graduate Assts
Spend time outside of class to discuss **academic** issues with:	68.3	92.7	19.5	29.3
Spend time outside of class to discuss **personal** issues with:	39.0	82.9	22.0	19.5
Spend time outside of class in **informal discussions** with:	65.9	80.5	26.8	22.0
Call the following by his/her first name:	82.9	90.2	70.7	43.9
Engage in social activities with :	29.3	90.2	24.4	12.2

Other Activities:

During my Freshman year I did the following: (Percentage of responses from students)	%
Go home this semester other than at Holiday times	73.2
Call friends from high school	90.2
Join a sorority/fraternity	14.6
Join a campus organization	41.5
Do volunteer work (on/off campus)	92.7
Participate in athletics (includes club sports)	34.1
Be employed (off/on campus)	26.8

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